

CLASSIC CLIMBS

By Richard Schmidt
Photo's: Ben Bohm

Descend
behind
ridge

Descent

Approach

Eagles Folly

Area: Cogman's Buttress
Montagu

Parking: Gravel pullout on side
of R62, 1km after the rock tunnel,
driving towards Montagu.

Route grade: 16

Number of pitches: 7

Approach time: approx 1/2 hour

Climbing time: approx 5 hours

Descent time: approx 1 3/4 hour

Round trip time: 7 – 8 hours

Best time of year: All year.

Aspect: Morning shade

Amongst a sea of slick slopers, tenuous crimpers and bolts galore, lies a route that exemplifies tradition and style. Eagles Folly follows the immaculate arête/ridge which draws your attention as you drive through the tunnel entering Montagu. It lies high on the right of Cogman's Buttress, and drops dramatically from the summit crest to the scree below. The first ascent of was made by Greg Moseley and Brian DeVilliers in 1971 and was in fact the first rock climb ever to be climbed in Montagu.

The route follows the ridgeline dutifully, at times tending leftward to avoid shattered rock and at others using the very edge of the arête. Seven long and varied pitches brings one to a true summit ridge, affording an outstanding panorama.

Elegance, position and character are the ingredients, which definitely allow this route to slotted into the book of classics. The rock is generally sound, but discretion must be used here and there.

Approach

After exiting the rock tunnel on the Montagu side, drive on for 1km, then park on your left at a gravel pull-out opposite the obvious white dry river course. Scramble onto the slopes at the most convenient road cutting and head in the general direction of the base of the ridge. Continue up the watercourse to a brown rockband transecting it. Scramble rightward to turn the rockbank, then angle back to gain the watercourse again. Aim for a brown alcove capped by a triangular roof at the base of the ridge.

P1. 45m 12: Starting in the alcove, climb leftwards up a grey slab, turning the overhang delicately on the left. Step right and continue over clean steps and slabs, keeping close to the arête, to a stance.

P2. 45m 13: Tend leftwards up easy rock to a steep slab. Climb straight up to a corner above a blocky ledge. Climb the brown and grey corner, over a bulge, to a spacious stance.

P3. 40m 16: Stem up the wide break to a knobbed slab which leads to a layaway corner/crack. Climb this to a stance, or stance higher above shattered blocks.

P4. 48m 12: Step right and use the arête to gain the hanging slabs. Continue straight up to the top of a small gendarme.

P5. 45m 16: A spectacular corner capped by a triangular overhang: Use corners, cracks and a face to gain the main corner system. Step left at a chockstone onto the left edge of the arête. Climb this directly. Follow the crack, passing an overhang, to a stance.

P6. 48m 15: Step right onto a block. Use a finger crack and arête edge to pull up onto superb rock. Climb cracks, mantles and layaways to easier ground. Scramble to a stance.

P7. 20m 13: Move up an awkward corner on the left. Step right and up to a stance. Scramble along the ridge to a blocky summit.

Descent:

Scramble along and over the ridge. Drop down slopes on the Montagu side of the mountain and head for a neck between the two prominent peaks. Go down a wide open gully leading toward the road. Tend left at the base of the ridge, to traverse past the start of the route. Pick up your packs and continue down the dry watercourse back to the road.

Above: Richard Schmidt following the steep slabs high on the first pitch

Right: Ben Bohm getting airy on the arête of the spectacular fifth pitch

